

(TMI Journeys - November 2018)

Out-of-Body Myths, Legends & Facts

If Robert A. Monroe were still alive, he would be celebrating his 103rd birthday. He was 42 years old in 1958 when he experienced his first out-of-body. He tells that story on the terrific vintage video below from “The Morning Show” in 1979.

Today, 47 years after the publication of Bob’s groundbreaking 1971 book *Journeys Out of the Body*, there are still questions being asked and heads being scratched. So, in honor of Bob’s life, and in gratitude for his life’s work, here are—from the Institute’s point of view—some answers.

Q: What is an OBE?

A: An acronym for out-of-body experience, where the major portion of conscious awareness is active outside the limitations of the physical body

~ From the Glossary of *Ultimate Journey* (1994) by Robert A. Monroe

Q: Did Robert A. Monroe invent the term Out-of-Body?

A: The first reference to “out of body” appears in the book *Apparitions*, by G.N.M. Tyrrell, published in 1953 by Collier Books.

Charles T. Tart, PhD, “the father of modern parapsychology,” coined the acronym OOB, later refined to OBE, in his published literature on out-of-body experiences. Best known is his paper, “A Psychophysiological Study of OBEs in a Selected Subject,” originally published in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 1968, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 3-27

Bob and “Charley” formed a lifelong friendship when Bob reached out to him for possible answers. Bob’s OBEs were frightening him, to say the least, and he was feeling desperate for a way to explain them. Charley’s “OBE” handle seemed to fit the bill, and Bob began by using it in *Journeys Out of the Body*. The rest is history.

Q: Can anyone learn to travel out of body?

A: Theoretically, yes. In fact, Bob believed that we all go out of body during sleep, though most of us don’t remember after waking.

Q: Does The Monroe Institute teach you to go out of body?

A: Yes!

After the publication of *Journeys Out of the Body* in 1971 Bob became known as the OBE expert. Until his death in 1995 he was besieged by fans wanting to learn at his feet. They asked him to teach them how to go out of body, wanted his insight into the meaning of their OBEs, and tried to put him on a “guru” pedestal. All of which he resisted steadfastly. Why? Because he knew that for us to grow and develop in consciousness, we each must be our own teacher, our own expert.

Bob also felt strongly that teaching out-of-body methods would place too much importance on the OBE as a consciousness tool. It was *his* way, but not necessarily *everyone's* way, or even the *best* way to access deep states of awareness and learn from them. For that reason, he never allowed an OBE course to be taught at the Institute.

Fast forward to now. TMI's opinion has shifted. Thanks in no small part to Bob's foundational work, people are now smarter about consciousness and deep-state awareness. Bob's concerns about teaching out-of-body practices have been transcended.

William Buhlman, author, OBE explorer, lecturer, and teacher, brilliantly carries forward the whole OBE question. His wildly popular weeklong OBE Intensive has been a mainstay of our program catalog for years.

In OBE Intensive, Bill provides detailed preparation, techniques, control methods, mindset, and encouragement to every participant. “I also instruct them that, just like meditation, daily practice is essential. The bottom line,” Bill says, “is that every participant exits the class with all the knowledge and skills to have an OBE.” After that, it's up to us.

Q: Are OBE and astral travel the same thing?

A: For all intents and purposes, yes (again, our opinion), however, the content of OBEs may be drastically different among people, and among the OBEs of each person.

Q: Have OBEs been studied scientifically?

A: Yes, by Charles Tart and many others. But, as Bob would say, don't take our word for it! Google and find out for yourself.

Happy Journeys!